

Istook Says State Needs to Help Now

Highway Bill Contains \$110-Million More for I-40 Crosstown Expressway

Washington, D.C. – The I-40 Crosstown Expressway project took a big step forward today with the announcement that it would receive an additional \$110 million in the highway reauthorization bill.

“This is great news,” said Istook. “The Crosstown Expressway is critical to the continued revitalization of downtown Oklahoma City. It’s a vital artery for our state and city as well as for the entire federal highway system.”

“We should all applaud Senator Inhofe’s work in improving Oklahoma’s share of national highway funding, and helping to add further federal funds for the I-40 Crosstown Expressway expansion and realignment. This also means it’s time for the state now to help with their share of this crucial project, because the project will be delayed if they don’t help.”

Since 1998, the Oklahoma Congressional delegation has procured a staggering \$290 million total in federal money, which is 92% of the cost of relocating I-40. (That cost is about \$315-million; a separate \$45-million is needed to construct a local boulevard that will be built where the highway is now.). Istook personally secured over a third of that funding, including almost \$80 million in the last two years through his position on the Appropriations Committee and as chairman of the House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, and has played a key role in helping secure the other two-thirds. Istook says it’s now time for state government to help to finish the job.

“Everybody keeps saying this is Oklahoma’s most important project, but not everybody has been willing to help with it. I’ve reminded the Governor many times about the need for the state to help. He said he wanted to wait until we passed the new highway bill. Now we’ve passed it, so it’s time for action by the state to complement the heavy lifting we’ve done in Washington,” said Istook. “The average non-federal contribution on projects of this size is 39%. We’re not asking them for anything near that level, yet so far the state hasn’t committed one single penny. It’s time for the state to accept responsibility to help this important project to become a reality.”